

From [Abby Fuller <abbysbarn@tds.net>](mailto:abbysbarn@tds.net)

Sent Monday, June 21, 2004 3:54 pm

To [lbc@dcad.state.ak.us](mailto:lbc@dcad.state.ak.us)

Cc

Bcc

Subject Comments on the Homer remand

In the interests of not repeating what has been said elsewhere, please incorporate by reference the comments of CCAA.

To add to those comments, I will tell you of my own family's experience with emergency services. On Nov. 21, 2001 our 17 yr-old son was driving home from a friend's house when an oncoming driver lost control on black ice and hit him head-on. He was thrown into the windshield when his seatbelt broke, but it had held enough to keep him from going through it. (Seatbelts really do save lives!) This accident occurred about 6 1/2 miles out East End Rd, roughly a mile beyond the original proposed boundary for annexation, and a couple miles from Kachemak City. The road starts to climb and has several sharp curves, a good place for accidents on winter road conditions.

As it turned out, our son was not seriously injured, but he could have been. Had either vehicle been traveling faster, or the seatbelt been a bit weaker, he could have gone through the windshield. Two ambulances responded to the call, one from Homer and one from Anchor Point, which is 28 miles from Homer in the opposite direction. The Anchor Point rig had, by chance, already been in Homer when the call came in. It was a busy night because of the ice, there were several accidents on Baycrest Hill (the other side of town) that night. I can't help but think - what if our son had been thrown through the windshield and Homer's ambulance was already on another call, so the only ambulance that could respond had to come from Anchor Point? Worse, what if Homer had decided not to respond outside city limits anymore and there was no KESA?

There is a real need for one or more ambulances stationed out East End Rd, which KESA can do. As of 1/17/02 KESA had acquired at least one ambulance and had leased space for it. If it was not in service yet there were efforts underway to put it into service. Many HVFD volunteers already live out East, with an ambulance available nearby the response time for accidents and other emergencies east of Homer can be greatly reduced. I hate to see KESA's ability to provide these needed improvements to services curtailed by losing a significant chunk of their tax base to Homer. Homer cannot station an ambulance out where it needs to be, because it is outside their jurisdiction.

Although it was HVFD (and Anchor Pt through their mutual aid agreement) who responded, we were glad that KESA had been established to ensure that Homer would respond, and that our tax dollars were helping to pay for the response. (Although we also got a bill for \$500 for the ambulance ride.) We are also grateful for the unpaid volunteers who did a wonderful job, they have always provided services where-ever they were needed, regardless of boundaries. Hopefully KESA and HVFD can work together to improve services to the entire area, both the city and the

areas beyond.

My other comments address the state's interest, which I understand the LBC is supposed to reconsider after determining the impact of annexation on KESA. The LBC in the past has appeared to have a considerable anti-service area bias. This is contrary to the drafters' intent for boroughs to be the main local government, with cities eventually merging with the boroughs. Service areas are a part of the borough, and the LBC should be reluctant to harm a borough in order to favor a city. I understand there is a statutory preference for cities rather than creating service areas IF the services can be provided by a city. In the present case, the services needed in the area covered by KESA cannot be provided by annexing the entire area. (The LBC found that only 4.58 square miles met the standards for annexation.) KESA is necessary, it provides some of the most important services local government can provide (saving lives and property), and it is a part of the borough. When weighing the interests of KESA v. the interests of the city, they must be weighed objectively. Any bias should be in the favor of the borough, not the city.

Abigail Fuller  
PO Box 3392  
Moscow, ID 83843